

National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594

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Brief of Accident

Adopted 04/27/1993

LAX92LA029 File No. 1924	10/25/1991	VALLEJO, CA	Aircraft Reg No. N3456M	Time (Local): 21:56 PDT		
Make/Model:	Bell / 206B			Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Allison / 250-C20B		Crew	1	0	0
Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed		Pass	2	0	0
Number of Engines:	1					
Operating Certificate(s):	None					
Type of Flight Operation:	Business					
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation					
Last Depart. Point: CONCORD, CA				Condition of Light: Night/Dark		
Destination: NOVATO, CA				Weather Info Src: Witness		
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip				Basic Weather: Instrument Conditions		
				Lowest Ceiling: 200 Ft. AGL, Overcast		
				Visibility: .00 SM		
				Wind Dir/Speed: 270 / 015 Kts		
				Temperature (°C): Unk/Nr		
				Precip/Obscuration:		
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 42	Flight Time (Hours)				
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)			Total All Aircraft: 4541			
Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea; Helicopter			Last 90 Days: Unk/Nr			
Instrument Ratings			Total Make/Model: 301			
Airplane			Total Instrument Time: 527			

THE CERTIFICATED AIRLINE PILOT AND TWO PASSENGERS DEPARTED IN A HELICOPTER FOR THE PLANNED DESTINATION AIRPORT, LOCATED ABOUT 27 MILES NORTHWEST OF THE DEPARTURE POINT. THE PILOT RECEIVED A WEATHER BRIEFING IN WHICH VFR FLIGHT WAS NOT RECOMMENDED DUE TO LOW CEILINGS AND LOW VISIBILITY. THE PILOT WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA. THE PILOT RECEIVED A SPECIAL VFR CLEARANCE THROUGH AN AIRPORT TRAFFIC AREA, DEPARTING TO THE NORTHWEST. ABOUT 20 MILES FROM THE DEPARTURE POINT, WITNESSES OBSERVED THE HELICOPTER PARALLELING A HIGHWAY AT ABOUT 200 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND. THE WEATHER WAS REPORTED TO BE A 200 FOOT OVERCAST CEILING, GUSTY WINDS, HEAVY RAIN, AND VISIBILITY OF ABOUT 1/2 MILE. THE WITNESSES OBSERVED THE HELICOPTER STRIKE THE TOP OF A 223 FOOT HIGH TRANSMISSION TOWER AND EXPLODE. THE LOCATION OF THE TRANSMISSION LINE WAS MARKED ON THE AREA SECTIONAL CHART.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - ELECTRICAL TOWER
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - RAIN
5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) VISUAL LOOKOUT - RESTRICTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (C) ALTITUDE - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

THE PILOT'S INTENTIONAL FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER, CONTINUED FLIGHT INTO INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS, AND IMPROPER ALTITUDE. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS LOW CEILINGS, POOR VISIBILITY, AND RESTRICTED VISUAL LOOKOUT.